

COMMUNITY PARTNER CONNECTION

ONE department • ONE vision • ONE mission • ONE core set of values

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2015

100 bikes given to essay winners

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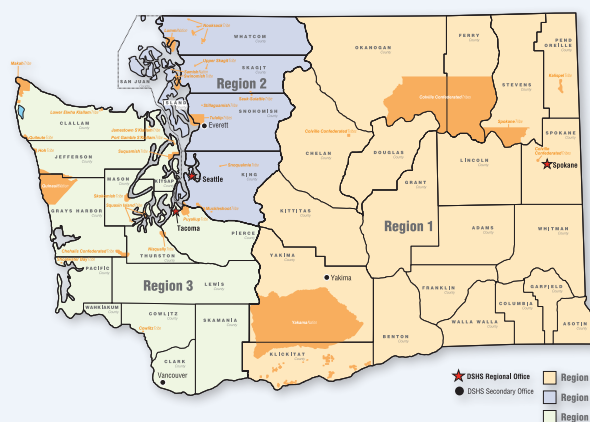


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Wenatchee Opportunity Conference

The Wenatchee Valley will host its first-ever Opportunity Conference on Nov. 14, 2015. The United Way of Chelan and Douglas Counties are working with Communication Across Barriers to bring this community-wide event to fruition. Communication Across Barriers is an organization founded by Donna Beegle to promote education around poverty issues and help move people out of poverty. Beegle grew up in generational poverty and dropped out of school at age 15, eventually completing her GED diploma and Associates degree while on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and later completing a bachelor's and masters degree in communications and a doctorate in educational leadership. Since completing her studies, she has dedicated her life to educating people about the issues that keep people in poverty and helping connect those in poverty to resources to help them become stable and self-sufficient.

The goal of the Opportunity Conference is to connect our neighbors in need with community resources and mentors who will make a difference in their lives. This will be a recurring annual event with plans to broaden the scope and the number of people served each year. The goal for the first year is to assist 40 families in a one-day gala event that will bring together mentors and resource people who will partner with neighbors in need to form an ongoing relationship to assist them in moving forward.



On March 4, 2015 approximately 250 representatives from the community met to learn about this great opportunity; DSHS was represented by three staff members and CSO Administrator Dennette Woodiuss. Attendees were given an overview of the upcoming conference and offered opportunities to sign up on various committees that will provide support before, during and after the November conference. DSHS staff will be involved in mentorship roles as navigators; on food committees; specialty experts providing knowledge about the availability and details of agency resources; food committee members; and public relation resources.

We are excited about this event and the opportunity to make a difference in our neighbors' lives.

Volunteers of America Western Washington join the ranks of the Community Partnership Program



by Sharon Paskewitz, Director of Operations

Volunteers of America Western Washington became a Washington Connection Community Partner in December 2014. This partnership allows us to deliver integrated and streamlined services to our clients by quickly accessing online services and programs (e.g., food benefits, cash assistance, affordable childcare and/or health benefits).

Due to homelessness, many households are not able to receive important letters from DSHS regarding their benefits. Our partnership provides us with the ability to access this service for our clients, which is very helpful to them.

We truly appreciate this partnership and will continue working towards stabilizing housing for Snohomish County residents, improving their quality of life and making our community better, stronger and happier!



This partnership allows us to deliver services to clients quickly online.

Why become a Washington Connection Community Partner?



A testimonial offered by Upper Skagit Tribe

by Caniece Perez, Social and Employment Services Coordinator

Personally, I have found (that) Washington Connection (is) very helpful (to people) because it offers clients a way to find and apply for a variety of services and assistance online. Clients can apply for various types of assistance offered by various state, federal and local services or non-profit agencies to include cash, food, medical, long-term care and child care. All a client has to do is enter some household information and the website will tell them the services for which they may qualify.

Clients can also complete renewals and report changes on-line. The portal has links to other sites that include, but are not limited to, registering to vote and reporting welfare fraud. Another bonus to using this site is that I don't have to spend time searching other webpages or sites, since most services can be found through this portal.

Overall, Washington Connection is very helpful for clients who have transportation issues as it provides another means to connect to services. The Upper Skagit Tribe is pleased to participate in the Washington Connection Community Partnership Program offering services to the community.

A testimonial offered by Public Health - Seattle and King County

by Luiz Salazar, King County Public Health

The Access & Outreach Team of Public Health-Seattle & King County's goal is to reduce barriers and help King County residents apply for various benefit programs. As a Basic Food Contractor, we help clients apply for food benefits. One of our targets is families in mixed-citizenship households. For example, some families don't realize they could be potentially eligible for Basic Food benefits because their children are U.S. Citizens.

Another target for the team is working with teen parents who'll be returning to high school in the hopes of obtaining their diploma. Many of these teens are not aware that they could be eligible for Working Connections child care. We help the teen complete the application, submit through Washington Connection and follow up for any documentation needed so the teen can be approved in time for school.

Some of the most vulnerable residents in King County are our seniors. Many seniors who are on Medicaid don't realize they could be eligible for the Medicare Savings Programs. As we work with seniors for Basic Food benefits and Medicare coverage we also submit applications through Washington Connection for the Medicare Savings Programs. It's extremely gratifying when seniors are approved for this program as Washington state will pay for both their Medicare and Part D drug premiums.

To learn more about our services please call 1-800-756-5437 or visit www.kingcounty.gov/health/access.

A testimonial offered by WithinReach

by Liz Snow, Food & Health Access Manager, WithinReach

WithinReach is a statewide nonprofit that connects Washington families to food, health and child development resources. Washington Connection is a great tool that allows our organization to provide quick and easy access to DSHS assistance programs for our clients. The streamlined process of submitting applications electronically means that we can spend more time talking with our clients about their needs and helping connect them to additional resources to support their families.

Several populations that we serve have benefitted from this method of applying. For example, we often speak with busy parents who are pressed for time and

would have had difficulty applying on their own as well as with individuals who do not have access to a computer or internet and are in need of assistance immediately. For persons experiencing homelessness, it has been extremely helpful to complete the Basic Food application on Washington Connection so they can simply walk into their local CSO to conduct their interview and get their benefits started immediately.

Just last week at a Snohomish County Food Bank, a WithinReach staff person met with a couple looking for community resources to support their growing family. The pregnant mom was hoping to get signed up for

Washington Apple Health so that she could get prenatal care, but had never before enrolled in any community resources and it was her first time hearing about the available programs. The father was there, too, and they were both interested in any help they could get as new parents. After our staff person helped them sign up for Apple Health, she showed them www.WashingtonConnection.org. The couple used the website to find and apply for programs and services that they might be eligible for, including Basic Food and WIC. They were both eager to sign up for both programs to save money for the new little one on the way.

Veterans Keep Vow to Never Leave One Behind

by Steve Dunkelberger, Tuesday, May 12, 2015, Tacoma Weekly

The military has its own “corporate culture” that civilians just don’t understand.

Soldiers often distill it down to the motto, “embrace the suck.”

Those in uniform struggle on without complaint and don’t ask for help, especially help from civilians or even from the government they wrote a check in the amount of “up to and including their lives” to protect.

And that culture is killing them. A veteran commits suicide once an hour, double the civilian rate.

A third of all homeless men are veterans, some 300,000 on any given night. Services to help are available of course, but veterans struggle on and largely “embrace the suck” instead of asking for assistance.

Navy veteran Alfredo “Tito” Medina and former Army soldier Scot Pondelick cobbled together a roster of some 130 veteran-focused resource groups that hosted a third annual Veterans Resource Fair Saturday, May 30 at the Tacoma Dome hoping to change that.

We’re hoping to exceed last year’s event which drew 1,013 veterans and their families. With 600,000 veterans in Puget Sound, the need far outweighs that capacity.

“I think it is messed up that the biggest veteran event we have is a parade that people see and then just go home,” Medina said.

Nonprofits at the free event will connect veterans with community services, VA benefits, legal services, homeless services, educational benefits, medical screenings, dental resources and support networks, courtesy of an army of mostly veteran volunteers.



Everything is done by volunteers, from the painting of dozens of sandwich board signs and waving flags over Interstate 5, marketing the event to staffing informational booths, to providing haircuts and dental screenings, to offering job referrals and employment placement services to handing out backpacks, sleeping bags and boots to all veterans in need.

“We do this as individuals,” Medina said. We call ourselves a humongous community of partners.”

Medina and Pondelick raise money through on-line donations and a few sponsorships, but spend thousands of dollars of their own money to keep the event free for both veterans and the long list of cottage non-profits tasked with helping them.

“They don’t have the budget to pay a vendor fee or anything like that to get into an event like this,” Medina said. “We offer this as a service to the community. It takes us about six months to put this together.”

The event is sponsored by The Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Alliance to End Veteran Suicide, Sea Mar, Military Veteran Solutions, the Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs, Humana, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, DAV, Tacoma Public Utilities and the Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association.



“We do this as individuals,” Medina said. We call ourselves a humongous community of partners.”

MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT:

<http://theveteransresourcefair.us> or on FACEBOOK AT:
<http://www.facebook.com/TheVeteransResourceFair>

DSHS and Washington Connection's "Fresh Approach to Hunger" at Northwest Harvest's 2015 Annual Conference

Northwest Harvest's 2015 Annual Conference welcomed close to 200 attendees to two days of discussions, questions and engagement with the theme of "A Fresh Approach to Hunger." Northwest Harvest offered participants a full array of classes and speakers focused on creative and collaborative solutions for energizing emergency food programs, sharing stories, strengthening organizations, promoting nutrition and taking action in the community.

the importance of stories, how they can make an impact when shared with the broader community and how she personally is citing her story to make a difference at schools across the Puget Sound and the United States. Keynote speaker Leanne Brown was featured later in the day and gave an inspirational talk in regards to her award-winning cookbook *Good and Cheap: Eat Well on \$4/Day*. She examined whether it was possible to eat easily and healthily on a food-stamp budget. Brown highlighted the impact of her book on various agencies and food banks nationwide and offered examples on how attendees could use the book in their own communities. Northwest Harvest, in partnership with Workman Publishing, also gave a copy of the latest edition of *Good and Cheap* to each attendee of the conference.

In addition to speakers and classes, this year's conference also featured a revamped Tools for Our Trade section. Attendees were encouraged to take time throughout the day to explore five interactive areas

designed to collaborate directly with service providers. The Resource Zone specifically highlighted the work of Washington Connection and DSHS's Mobile Community Service Office. Jarret McGill generously contributed his time and expertise to inform attendees of essential resources for their clients as well as highlight Washington Connection partnerships and the benefit portal, a new DSHS web-based universal application which allows Washington residents to easily and securely apply for a broad array of services and benefits. Jan Egland and Christina Edmondson graciously hosted the Mobile Community Service Office's 40-foot truck, which was parked directly outside of the conference site. The truck served as an impressive feature at the conference, and afforded attendees the opportunity to interact directly with DSHS staff.

Hosted for more than 30 years, the Northwest Harvest Annual Conference is a much-loved venue for presenters from local and national agencies and partner programs to connect, engage and inspire each other in working towards addressing root causes of hunger in Washington. Northwest Harvest is grateful to Jarret, Jan, and Christina for accepting its invitation to participate at the annual conference, and looks forward to future collaboration with Washington Connection and DSHS.



The day began with a warm introduction by Northwest Harvest CEO Shelley Rotondo, followed by opening speaker Lois Brandt, author of the children's book *Maddi's Fridge*. Brandt discussed

the importance of stories, how they can make an impact when shared with the broader community and how she personally is citing her story to make a difference at schools across the Puget Sound and the United States.

Tips & Hints

Washington Connection SAW Account tips and hints:

How can I create a Washington Connection SAW account?

You can do this one of two ways:

1. Go to [Washington Connection](#) website, find the Create Account drop-down menu on the top; choose [Create New Account](#), and fill out the form. When you complete, you will have a Secure Access Washington (SAW) account set up for you.

2. If you already have a [Secure Access Washington \(SAW\)](#) account, you need to register your SAW account with Washington Connection. Simply go to [Washington Connection](#) website, find the Create Account drop-down menu on the top, choose [Register Your Account](#) and fill out the form. When you complete, Washington Connection will be able to recognize your SAW account.

See [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) "Creating an Account" for more information.

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Tips & Hints

What should I do if I receive a message stating that my password has expired?

One of the security features of your SAW account is to have you renew your password every 13 months. When your password expires, you will be prompted to enter your current password and create a new one. The password field is case-sensitive.

If you receive a temporary password, make sure you type the temporary password into the password field by hand. Don't copy and paste the temporary password because an extra character will be inadvertently attached during the process.

See [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) "Password & User Name" for more information.

How do I know if I'm logged into Washington Connection?

To verify that you are logged in when working on an application, look for your name in the upper right corner of the page just to the left of the logout button. If your name is there, you are logged in. If not, find the Login menu on the top of the home page and log in. Make sure you are logged in when you start a new application or start a new session after experiencing a timeout.

Why do I want to create a Washington Connection SAW account?

If you are applying for services through Washington Connection and you are the head of household of an assistance unit, it's recommended that you create a Washington Connection SAW account so your information can be saved.

Also, if you are the designated head of household and receiving assistance or benefits from DSHS, you may be able to create a Client Benefit Account and monitor your household's benefits and renewal dates. You need to have a Washington Connection SAW account before you can create your Client Benefit Account. See Steps to create a Client Benefit Account (CBA) for more information.

Internet Browser and Website Timeout

Why is my browser stuck in a loop and won't let me navigate on the Internet?

An out-of-date web cache (Temporary Internet Files folder) may be the problem. Clearing your web cache (or cookies) can fix internet errors that cause your browser to freeze or crash.

The cache is set to copy web contents you've visited so the browser can load the contents quickly from your computer when you visit these websites again. However, this data can accumulate a long list of files that slows down your web browser.

Before clearing your cache, you should LOG OFF from your Washington Connection session. After clearing the cache, you should close the browser window, then open a new browser window and log back into Washington Connection. We recommend clearing your temporary files every 90 days or sooner.

Here are [instructions](#) for clearing files on the most widely used internet browsers.

How does "timeout" work during my Washington Connection session?

"Timeout" is a security feature to protect personal information after 30 minutes of screen inactivity. You can avoid timeout by clicking "OK" after seeing the warning message.

If you are logged into your account, a timeout warning message will appear after 20 minutes of screen inactivity, but the timeout will occur after a total inactivity of 30 minutes.

If you don't have an account or you are not logged into your account, a timeout warning message will appear after 27 minutes of screen inactivity. But the session timeout will occur after a total inactivity of 30 minutes.

Pedaling towards a brighter future

100 Tacoma-area children were rewarded for their enthusiasm for education during a bike giveaway at the Henry T. Schatz Boys and Girls Club May 22. The bikes were donated by Larson Automotive and given to low-income kids by DSHS.

"DSHS is able to make sure these bikes get into the hands of the most deserving children, and all I am is the middle man to provide them," said Pierce County Toys for Tots Coordinator George Height.

In order to win one, children age 8 and younger had to write an essay addressing why furthering their education is important to them. Organizers hope the bikes will motivate the winners to focus on the books and stay in school.

"It'll get more people interested in education, and that'll give them more options. Not just work options, but many other options," said Community Engagement



Manager Eddie Rodriguez. "I think it's just a great thing. Anytime we bridge employment and education, we can't go wrong."

In addition to the bikes, students were also given complimentary school supplies.